



State of California
Respiratory Care Board
444 North 3rd Street, Suite 270
Sacramento, CA 95814
Telephone (916) 323-9983
Fax (916) 323-9999
www.rcb.ca.gov



February 07, 2005

Inquiry: My RT Medical Director, directly over me, has written a weaning protocol that I disagree with. He has indicated in the weaning protocol for the RT to ask the nursing to give a patient sedation. I disagree with that. It is the province of the Doctor to ask or order the nurse to give sedation, not the RTs. Do you agree with me?

Response: I have seen several protocols where it is appropriately written for interaction to occur between disciplines caring for a patient on a ventilator. Since nursing and respiratory usually have this type of relationship established, your question may be one of semantics and not one of a practice concern. An example of where this might be appropriate is when sedation has been withheld from a patient to accomplish a weaning trail. In this case, it would be appropriate for the RT to let the nurse know when they have completed their trial and that sedation could be re-started.

In my opinion, as long as the sedation order has already been written by the physician outlining the route, dose, frequency and specific pain/sedation criteria, there should not be an issue of having the RT collaborate with the nurse regarding sedation administration. If the order is not written that would cause me to have concerns as to the relevance of the protocol. However, without seeing a copy of the protocol in question any additional comment would just be speculation.

I hope this offers you some information that can assist you and your medical director in reaching a common ground to ensure the best care will be provided to your patients. This letter, however, is in no way intended to render an opinion concerning the scope of practice of the registered nurse who may be involved in such a procedure. Should you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Executive Officer of the Respiratory Care Board.

Reference #: 2005-C-01